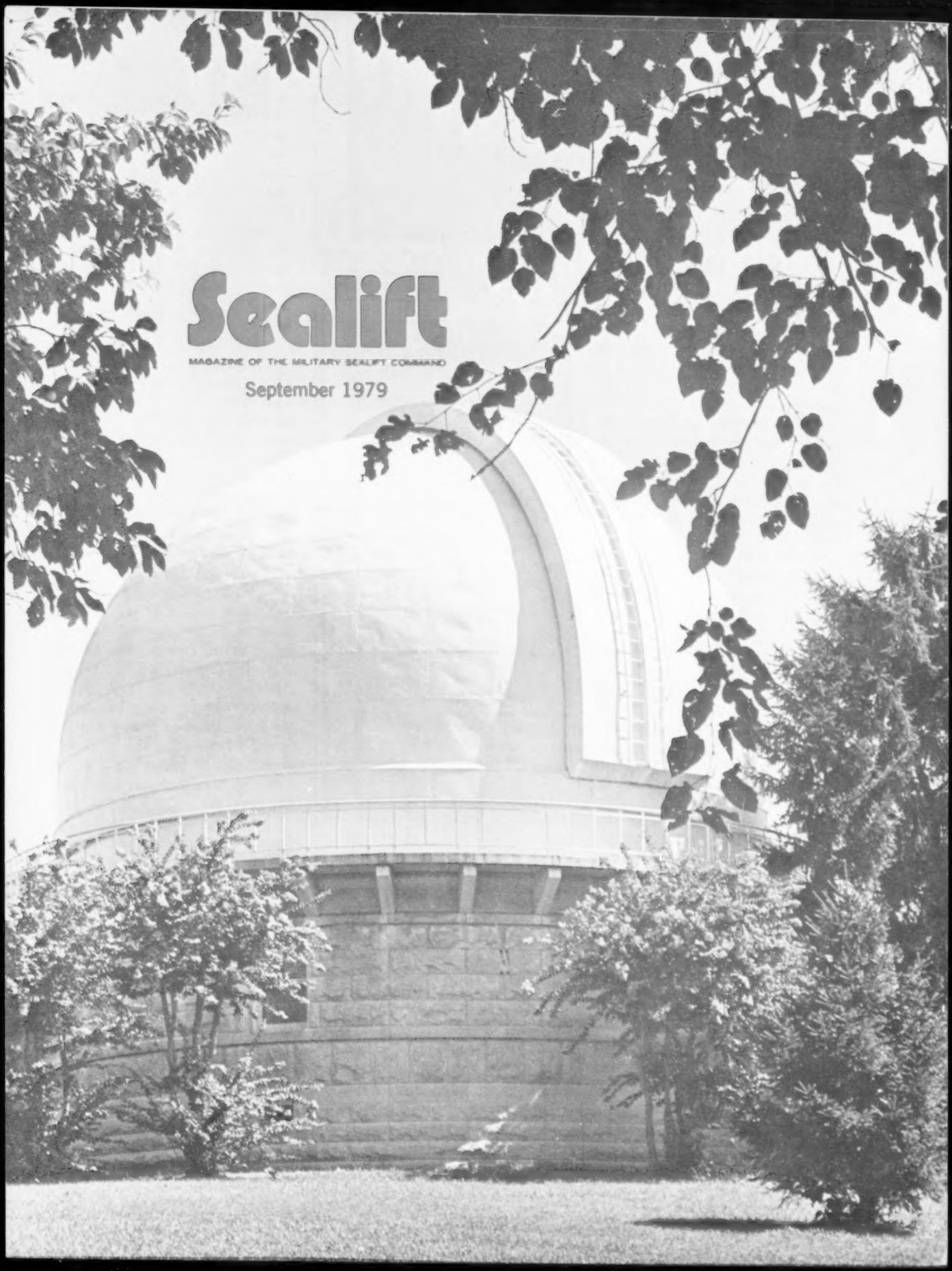

Sealift

MAGAZINE OF THE MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

September 1979

Pushing For Improvement

As most MSC members know, Vice Adm. John D. Johnson devoted considerable effort to improving living and working conditions in MSC. Before he was promoted and assigned a new Navy command, a great deal of effort had been exerted and some of that investment is beginning to bear fruit.

I am pursuing and will continue to pursue those same goals, and I would like to briefly recap where we stand.

We know we need to improve our ability to recruit and retain people. We know also that there are factors that can easily become major and long-term problems.

Among the obvious concerns are the $47,500 pay cap, the 5.5 per cent cap on pay increases, shore leave, training opportunity, habitability of ships, the remote location of our headquarters at Bayonne and late delivery of pay checks, especially those for retroactive pay increases.

I am personally taking our case for an exemption from the 5.5 per cent cap on pay increases to higher Navy officials and we are working to determine if we can obtain an exemption from that provision. I am also talking—on an almost daily basis—with responsible officials to make certain they understand the long-term impacts of the pay ceiling. I plan to continue those efforts in your behalf.

In all honesty, I cannot offer any strong hope or expectations for the early overturn of those ceilings because national policy guidance gives us a slim chance at best. Nevertheless, we are making a strong and honest effort.

In other areas, we are progressing more rapidly. For example, recent actions by MSC, Atlantic include setting up a lounge and sleeping facility for those who stay at Bayonne overnight. Mariners will pay only a minimal housekeeping fee and they may also use the adjoining cafeteria, with "bed and board" costs deductible from later paychecks, if desired.

A lounge is also being established to serve mariners at MSC, Atlantic. Its features will include carpeting, color TV, reading material, vending machines to dispense drinks and food, and a receptionist who can provide current information and help make certain that our mariners see the people they need to talk with.

These are only two of the more conspicuous changes that Capt. Dick Gooden, the MSC, Atlantic commander is making in his efforts toward immediate and wide-ranging improvements in the relationships between our seafaring mariners and their shoreside support personnel. Emphasis is on cooperation, service and effective two-way communications.

We also have taken action to set up Atlantic hiring offices at Bayonne, Port Canaveral, Norfolk and New Orleans. People in those offices will be active in publicizing MSC career opportunities and hiring new MSC mariners. In addition, however, they will also serve as troubleshooters, helping mariners with problems such as emergency leave, transportation, or any of the other things that can be frustrating when trying to get to or from a ship.

In addition, plans are well under way to enable our mariners to take physical exams in those same areas, rather than having to go exclusively to Bayonne.

In the Pacific, similar efforts are being made to ensure that MSC is a welcomed employer. Pacific, for example, is devoting a lot of time and effort to endeavors to upgrade shipboard habitability. Of course, funding is always a problem, especially in view of the age of many of our ships. However, where they can be proved cost effective, near term investments are being made to improve our long-term worth as a marine employer.

The actions noted above are needed. They are important, both to MSC and to each of you. But, there is a lot more to be done and it will take time and considerable effort before we can resolve many of our problems. We are making that effort, though, and we will continue to do so.

Together we can accomplish a great deal if we exert our efforts in a positive manner, toward reachable goals. We merely have to be moving together and in the right direction.

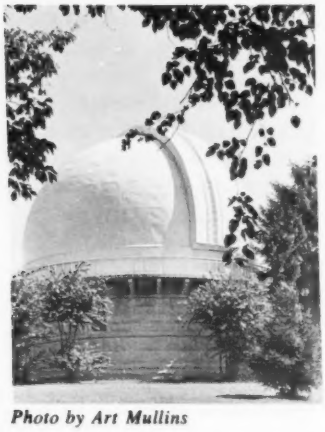

Photo by Art Mullins

COVER: At midnight on the grounds of the Naval Observatory this dome becomes a giant eye that observes the universe. Observatory astronomers provide data that goes into the Nautical and Air Almanacs, and recently they discovered a new moon around the planet Pluto. See story on page 6.

Rear Adm. Bruce Keener, III
Commander, Military Sealift Command

Larry C. Manning
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Sealift

MAGAZINE OF THE MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND

Vol. XXIX No. 9 Washington, D.C. September 1979

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Rogovich Riding Fast Career Track

By Martin Gershen

Steven Rogovich, of Queens, New York City, is a young man in a hurry.

He is a Military Sealift Command mariner who has the brains and the talent to get him what he wants from his seagoing career.

Rogovich, 26, is first assistant engineer aboard USNS Powhatan, a new, fully automated seagoing Navy tug that has been assigned to Military Sealift Command.

He expects to be a chief engineer within a year.

That's not bad for a young man who graduated from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point just four years ago.

"I never thought I'd get this far, this fast," Steve candidly tells a visitor in his spacious cabin on the Powhatan. "I don't know anyone from my class at the academy who is a first engineer."

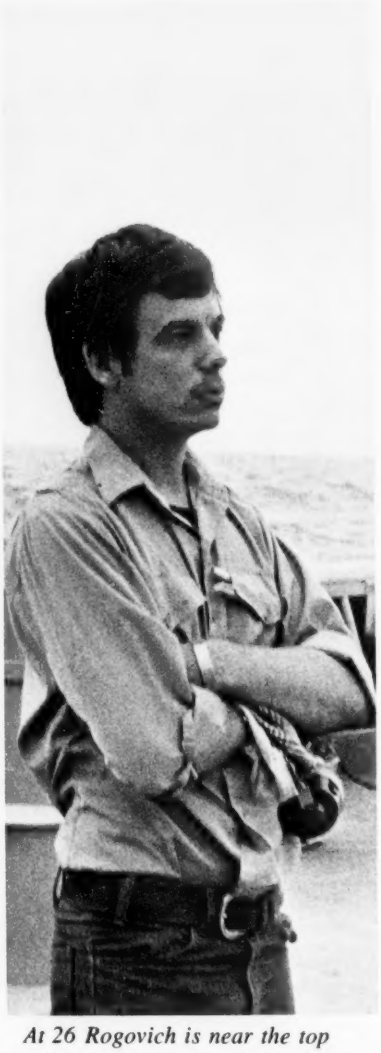
Young Rogovich seems almost overwhelmed by his rapid climb up the ladder.

"I've always wanted to travel and do everything different, and I guess I'm doing it. I know I'm going up very fast but I love the work and I see a great future."

Getting where he is involved no politics. There is plenty of work for skilled engineers with MSC and Rogovich just took advantage of opportunities as they knocked.

"Three days after graduation I was working for MSC aboard USNS Towle, sailing to the Arctic and the Antarctic.

"Then I sailed on the Falcon Princess, going from the Persian Gulf to the Far East and Europe. Then I was assigned to the survey ship Bartlett, sailing to the Panama Canal and Bermuda as a third assistant engineer.



At 26 Rogovich is near the top of his profession but feels seagoing life could be improved.

"I next went on the Harkness and we visited the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico and Haiti. Then I was 13 months on the Hayes going to Bermuda and the U.S. East Coast, and three months in Mexico—including Acapulco—and then the Panama Canal, and Caribbean islands. I wound up in Wisconsin aboard Powhatan."

He dashes off the names of far away places with the casual air of an old salt who visits these ports so often and so routinely they have lost most of their exotic appeal.

Rogovich was appointed to the maritime academy by Rep. Lester L. Wolff (D-N.Y.) and moved easily into the engineering program.

"I always had an aptitude for the mechanical, for mathematics and design and how to operate and repair things," he explained.

He graduated as a mechanical engineer and immediately fulfilled his moral obligation to go to sea. Rogovich credits MSC with helping him move ahead.

"They sent me to the electronics school run by the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Assn. I learned about automated systems, how to troubleshoot them, and to identify and correct problems. And I know they're planning to send me to other schools.

"The training department has been more than cooperative with me. John Ward the director of training has done a lot for me," he said.

Steven's primary objective is to become a chief engineer as quickly as possible.

"Not becoming a chief engineer is like going to college and not getting a degree," he explained.

But now that he sees the chief's license on the horizon, he feels he should relax a little.

"I've stayed on ships almost all of my career. Now that I have reached where I am I can see outside conditions better. Now I can get more involved in a personal life."

Rogovich said he has become alienated from life by going to sea. In four years he has had five months of vacation. To a landlubber that may seem like a very good deal, but Rogovich doesn't think so.

"Except for those five months, I have lived aboard ship every moment of my time, working or not. I

don't go home every night. I don't get weekends off."

The world is in a new era, he said, and the life of a seaman has changed. The seamen himself has changed and now his treatment must change too.

"The old stereotype of a drunken seaman who shoveled coal into a furnace is gone. Life at sea is different now and so are ships. There are less people to do the work and an engineer has to know a lot more. Take a ship like this. It doesn't carry an electrician or a refrigeration man. The engineer has to know all that.

"The best description of my job is systems engineer. You have to know every part of every system, and be totally aware of what is going on all the time.

"There is much more complicated and exotic equipment aboard ship today. Powhatan has a controllable pitch propeller system and really advanced electronic equipment.

"We've switched from a DC to an AC electrical system which makes the controls much more complicated. And we have an environmental system that includes heating, air conditioning and a sewage disposal unit."

Life is different for deck department people, too, he pointed out.

"Go on the bridge and you see the mate has to understand and use radar and satellite navigation, as well as a collision avoidance system that involves complex electronics. The ship today is a world of electronics—not sails and boilers," he pointed out.

But there is a problem for which men like Rogovich, a new breed of mariner, seek a solution.

He thinks more can be done for the mariner, the specialist who lives in a closed society aboard ship and doesn't even get to see his shipmates during off-duty hours. They are on duty. Most of the glamor, and much of the cameraderie have disappeared from the life of the seafarer.

"I love the sea. I want to stay close to ships. But I want to establish myself. I feel isolated at sea. I look around me at other guys my age. They're getting married, buying houses, putting up curtains, cutting the grass.

"I don't know anyone from my class at the academy who is a first engineer."

"They don't understand what I do at sea. Their concept of a seaman is weird. They think it's like Love Boat, that I wear a uniform and just stand around with a glass of whiskey in one hand and pinch the girls with the other.

"Maybe they cruised to Bermuda. But they didn't go like I went. They didn't see the oil and the dirt and the bilges."

Rogovich loves his life at sea but at 26 with an engineering degree and several years of experience, he realizes he would be in demand ashore.

And some day he would like to marry. He doesn't even consider that now because he doesn't think it is fair to ask a woman to wait for him for six months or a year while he goes off to sea.

What would it take to keep a man like Rogovich happy aboard ship?

Let wives go to sea. The Europeans do it, Rogovich said.

But most important, Rogovich believes professional seamen should be given more time ashore.

"Not becoming a chief engineer is like going to college and not getting a degree."

"If you had more time off, you could have more time at home. Then we would have a better kind of person out here. Offering more normal life ashore would attract a better person to the sea," he reasoned.

"Sure my quarters on this ship are outstanding. They're beautiful, comfortable, roomy and air conditioned. But it's still a ship. And it's still at sea.

"The pay is good, but what do you do with a thousand dollar check in the middle of the Indian Ocean enroute to the Persian Gulf?"

The pension plan is fine, he admits, but he sometimes wonders whether he will live long enough to enjoy it.

Rogovich is pretty typical of the new breed of American mariner, highly skilled, highly knowledgeable and highly motivated. But the world has shrunk from a globe to a golfball and seagoing life has lost much of its mystique.

The new breed of mariner is seeking a new way of life. The logical ones, those who are objective, like Steven Rogovich, know that much has been done for them. U.S. seafarers, MSC mariners included, get high pay, have more leave every year than those who work ashore, and they enjoy comparable benefits.

The don't get off on holidays, and have no long weekends. In fact, they spend most of their weekends aboard ship, at sea. Long distance marriages can suffer considerable strain and unique father-son-daughter experiences can't be played back on video tape. Helping a child grow up requires that a father be there.

Many mariners are not convinced that "landlubbers" really understand how it is at sea, or appreciate the negative aspects of the profession. That's what they keep trying to get across, and Rogovich's success story makes him an effective spokesman.

He's a man who likes what he is doing, who is good at it, who is well paid, but who still wants something more out of life. And he wants the non-seafarer to understand why. ⚓

Naval Observatory The Nation's Timekeeper

By Lt. Cmdr. William H. McAllister, USNR-R

When daylight-savings time ends on Sunday, October 28, most Americans will be trying to remember how to adjust their watches, ahead or back.

Not Navy Capt. Joseph C. Smith. For him and the 178 members of his little-known but important Navy command, located on Embassy Row in Washington, D.C., time is the matter of their essence.

And it's precise matter too—one that can require time accurate to one-one-millionth of a second.

Captain Smith, a Tennessee native who is a qualified submarine officer, heads the Naval Observatory, a unique military command which serves as the Department of Defense—and the nation's—official timekeeper.

As Smith put it: "We do the time of day for the nation."

Located on a 72-acre tree-covered knoll on Massachusetts Avenue in northwest Washington, the observatory is also known to many tourists as the official residence of the vice president. A handsome white Victorian house, run by Smith for the Secretary of the Navy, serves as home for Walter Mondale and his family.

Although the observatory that surrounds the Mondale home is the oldest scientific organization in the Navy, its functions are largely unknown to many people.

"Most think we have something to do with meteorology and astrology," said one officer assigned to the observatory.

The Naval Observatory is the nation's official timekeeper. Located on 72 acres in northwest Washington, it also includes the home of the vice president of the United States.

"Most think we have something to do with meteorology and astrology."

Modern technology, as Smith is quick to point out, has made the observatory's functions all the more important. The nation's computers, navigation and weapons systems, and high-speed satellite communications depend on accurate timekeeping, he noted.

"It's phenomenal the number of people who want precise time," Smith said.

No one keeps time better than the observatory which has 35 atomic

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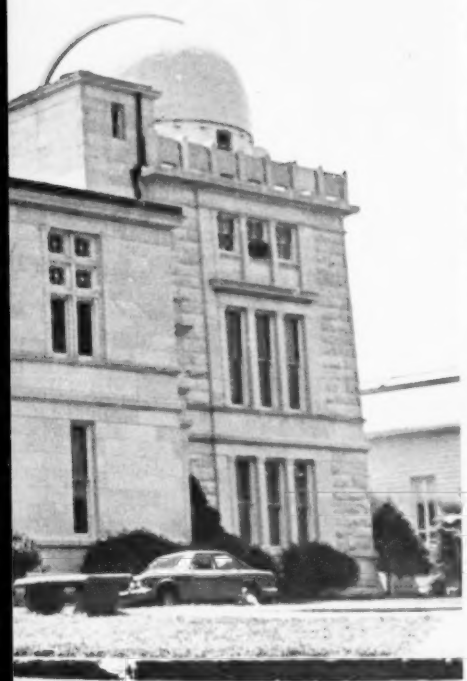
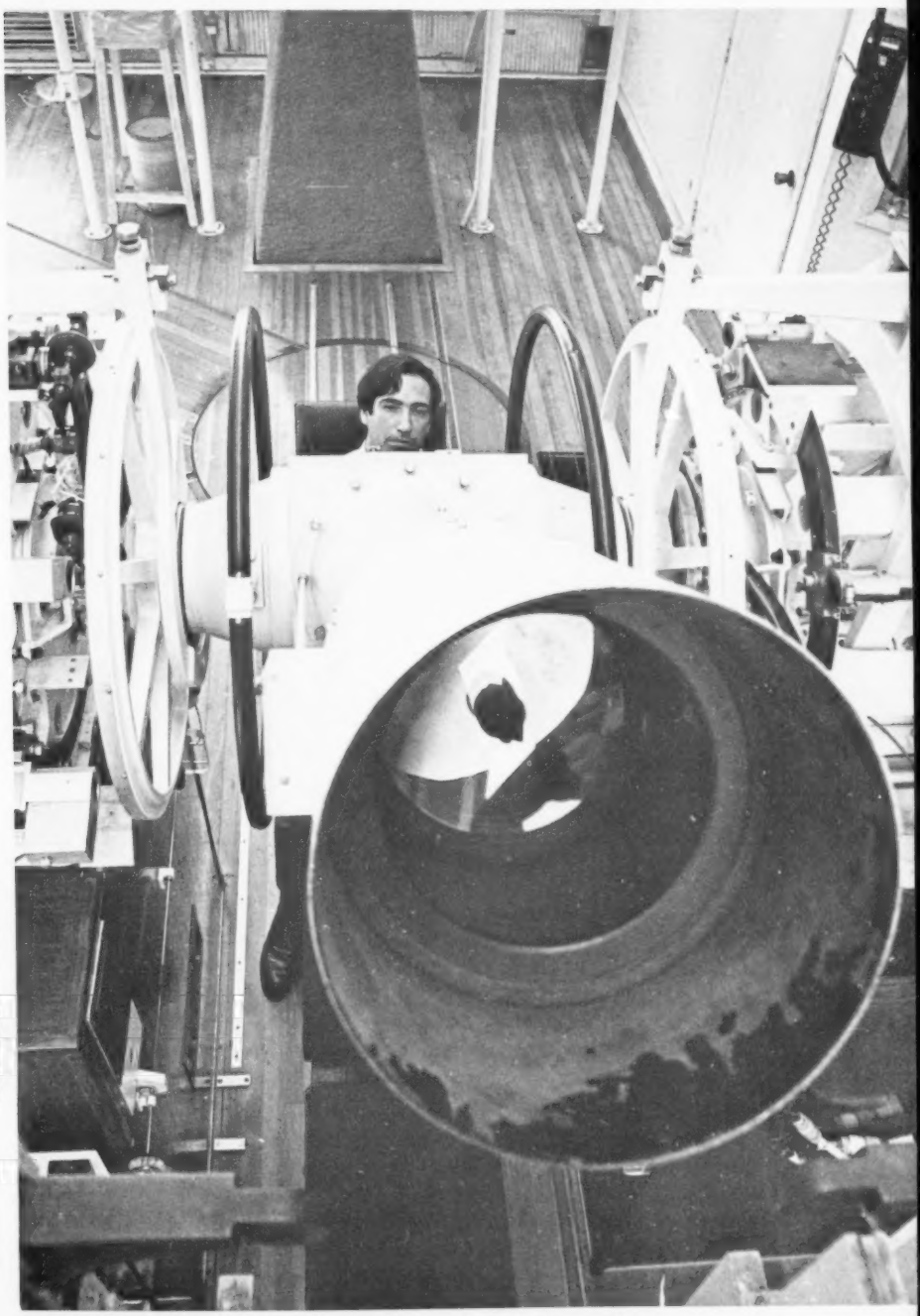




Dr. Stephen Gauss checks star positions with a 6-inch transit.

Orion Nebula was photographed through the observatory's telescope in Arizona. Exposure time was two hours.

Observatory

Continued

clocks. Together they are capable of measuring time to the nearest one-one-millionth of a second. Accurate time from the observatory is transmitted by radio to ships at sea to aid in navigation.

The Navy's clocks are so precise that one observatory supervisor has been known to worry that his staff will spend all its time checking the decimal points after seconds on the clocks and forget to check the second hand as well.

As a submarine officer, Smith knows first hand the value of "precise time," as military planners call it. With time as precise as that kept by the observatory, it is "virtually impossible to jam" the high-speed messages that military commands send and receive.

Such communications are vital to Navy fleet operations for surface ships and subs often are required to operate in an almost total communications blackout.

But no ship in the Navy and very few in the world could operate without some of the information produced by the observatory.

For example, the Nautical Almanac prepared by the observatory is used by navigators from many nations, including officers aboard Military Sealift Command controlled ships, to pinpoint their positions as they journey across the seas.

The almanac contains the positions of the sun, moon and all visible planets which are used for navigation for every hour of the year. There are tables for calculating the times of sunrise and sunset, moonrise and moonset as well as for twilight.

Today, computers assist Naval Observatory astronomers in predicting the locations of the major stars in the celestial sphere at any given time and date. The observatory's almanac staff compiles celestial data four years in advance of the printing of its Nautical and Air Almanacs, assuring that the publications will be available well before they're needed.

Observatory publications are printed annually by the Government Printing Office and are among the GPO's "best sellers."

Because calendars are an essential part of timekeeping, the Naval Observatory not only serves as the nation's official timekeeper, but also as its calendar setter. Civil holidays, such as Labor Day and Memorial Day, are established by Congressional acts, but dates of religious holidays often vary.

The observatory's almanac office calculates the dates on which these events will occur four years in advance, using time-honored rules established by the various religions.

Moslem holidays, for instance, are dictated by the phases of the moon and observatory astronomers are helpful in calculating the dates.

Astronomers are the backbone of the observatory staff, supplying the data from which all calculations on the precise location of the stars and planets may be based. Observations of the stars are made not only from telescopes at the observatory's Washington grounds but also from the observatory's largest telescope near Flagstaff, Ariz.

Naval Observatory astronomers have been instrumental in major astronomical discoveries, most recently the discovery of a new moon around the planet Pluto.

The Naval Observatory currently is largely engaged in updating and purifying long-standing hypotheses about the motions of planets and stars so precise navigational information can be provided units of the fleet and other agencies.

This doesn't mean the observatory's scientific staff isn't engaged in new research. On the contrary, many staff members devote long hours of their time in enhancement of their professional development, Smith noted.

Astronomers' work is often "not glamorous," said Dr. J. A. Hughes, transit circle division head, whose work determines Earth positions down to your lot line. The 18 astronomers who work under Hughes must spend five to seven years making observations before they can consider a project completed.

Often their work is lonely, performed from midnight to 7 a.m. in an unheated telescoped dome with the stars as their only companions.

Telescope buildings are unheated to prevent heat distortion of the images received by the telescopes.

In winter, observers at the facilities wear special thermal suits to fight off the cold.

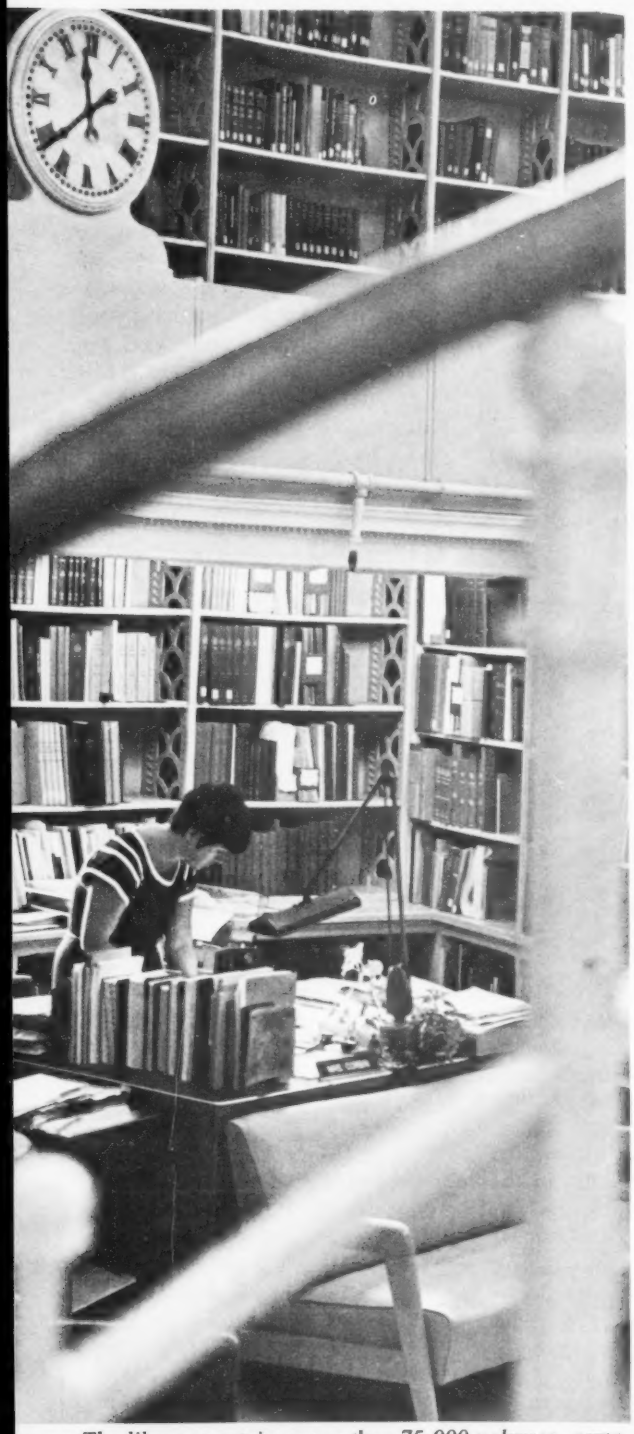
Still, the work is rewarding and visitors to the observatory note the workers' pride in their accomplishments during conversations.

"Someone must do this work," Smith said. "And no one else can do it as well as we do."

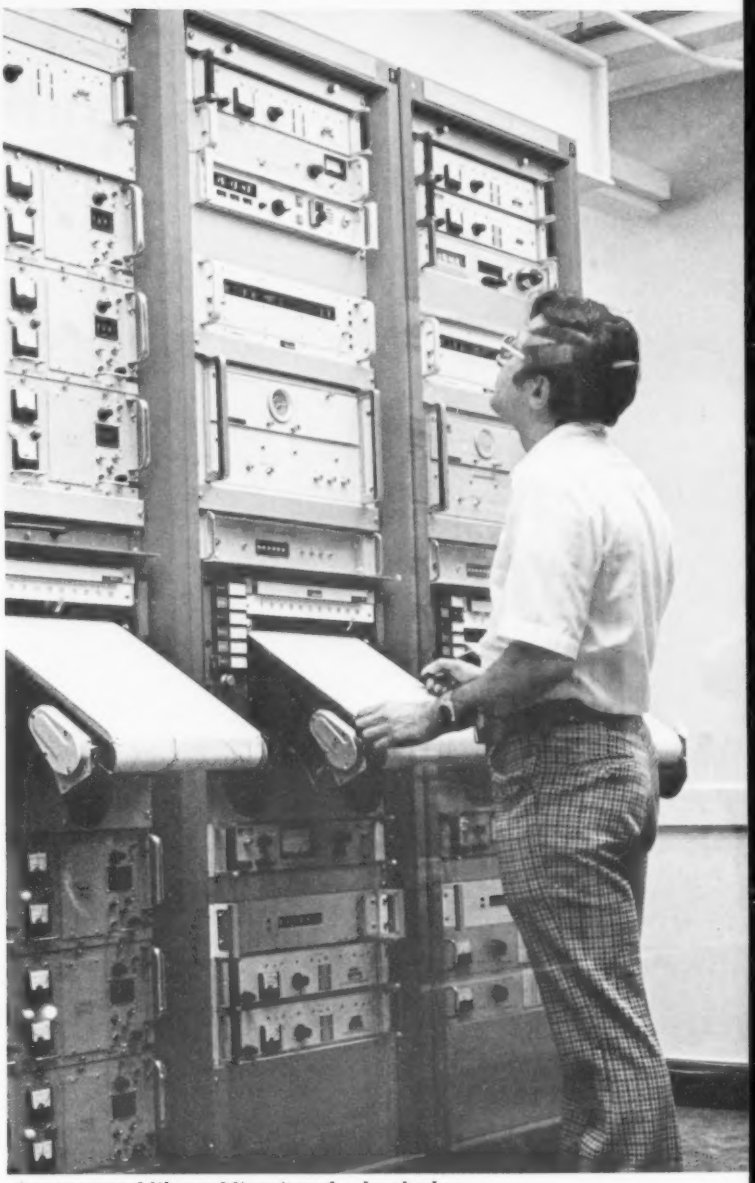
Even the Naval Observatory library ranks high, according to officials. It contains more than 75,000 volumes and some works date back to the 15th century.

But the key to the observatory's success has been its scientific staff, said Smith. "They're sort of a national asset."

"We do the time of day for the nation."



The library contains more than 75,000 volumes, some dating back to the 15th century.



Astronomer Mihran Miranian checks clocks.

Lt. Cmdr. William H. McAllister, USNR-R, has served as a public affairs specialist for 13 years and has written on various Navy topics for a variety of military and civilian publications. He is a member of Naval Reserve Office of Information Detachment 206 in Washington, D.C.

He is currently Virginia editor for The Washington Post and has been city editor of The Virginian-Pilot in Norfolk and a staff reporter for The Wall Street Journal.

McAllister is a graduate of the University of North Carolina where he received a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in journalism.

Seamen's Library A Friend In Soo

By Martin Gershen

What's a guy from Mauritius doing in a place like Soo?

Where's Mauritius, you might ask. Or better still, where's Soo?

Mauritius, as any deepwater seaman knows, is an island nation in the Indian Ocean lying somewhere between Diego Garcia and the Malagasy Republic.

And Soo, as any Great Lakes sailor knows, is Sault Ste. Marie, home of locks that link Lake Superior with Lake Huron and the world.

Soo is the popular Anglicized spelling and phonetic pronunciation of Sault and every seafarer knows that it refers to the twin cities—one in Michigan and the other in Ontario—that straddle the two Great Lakes.

The man from Mauritius was a seaman on a Greek ship, one of many foreign flag vessels that sail to Great Lakes' ports. He fell 15 feet into a Soo lock and broke both legs.

Except for its locks, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. is just a small town in the Midwest and being stuck there when you come from Mauritius is about the same as being stuck in Mauritius when you come from Sault Ste. Marie.

So when it appeared that the seaman from Mauritius would have to spend some time in the port called Soo, Nancyann Sillers was called.

Nancyann is director of the Sault Ste. Marie branch of the American Merchant Marine Library Assn., and while the library's purpose is to provide books for seamen, the Soo branch offers many additional services.

One is to help seamen in distress,

Nancyann and assistant Noel Weaver pose outside the library.

a service that can become a full time project and sometimes does.

Helping the Mauritius seaman was more than just visiting him in the hospital. It was contacting his family in Port Louis, capital of Mauritius, seeing that he was paid off properly, arranging with immigration authorities for his stay in the United States and cutting through yards of red tape.

These things weren't easy to do from Soo, because the town has limited facilities.

"You fire a shell down the main street of this town and it won't hit anyone because there's nobody here," Nancyann tells you candidly.

Helping seamen has become almost a lifetime occupation for her.

"Seamen are a great bunch of fellows. They appreciate what you do for them. But they're very much ignored. After World War II they didn't get any of the benefits of the armed forces.

"And they're ignored here," she says of lake seamen passing through Sault Ste. Marie. "They can't even get a check cashed.

"People think a sailor is just a rough guy. Of course they're rough and ready, but people don't realize how lonely they are, too. In many, many ways they're like prisoners. On the lakes they sign up for the season, not the trip. They can't go anywhere but walk the deck. And it's a long way from port to port," she said.

The library, one of six in the United States and the only one on the Great Lakes, has been serving seamen since 1915 when it was formed by Mrs. Belle Case, Nancyann recalled.

Duties increased to providing books, magazines and records to troops going to Europe in World War I. The service continued afterwards because the need was there and in 1921, when the library association was formed, the Soo Library became part of it.

Mrs. Edna Old Taylor, who came from a well-known Great Lakes family, continued the program after Mrs. Case died. Mrs. Taylor was appointed by the Lake Carrier Assn.

"You fire a shell down the main street of this town and it won't hit anyone because there's nobody here."

Mrs. Sellers as a teenager helped Mrs. Taylor. Following Mrs. Taylor's retirement, Mrs. Della Wylie took over. Nancyann became the library's fourth director in 1965 when Mrs. Wylie retired.

The library is a three story building and basement located in St. Marys Falls Park where the Army Corps of Engineers operates the locks.

The library is on the main floor. Upstairs there is a lounge and TV room. The library is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Nancyann has three assistants, Noel Weaver, whose father is an assistant cook on a lakes ship, her son, W. Robert Sillers and a relief man, Lee Mason.

All the books are donated and each ship is given two cartons of 25 books each. One is placed at the forward end of the 1,000-foot lakers and the other at the after end.

Every 10 days or two weeks the ships return the books and are given others.

But the service goes beyond that.

"Many times the seamen come here to read," Nancyann says. "Or they write to me to ask for special books or to take special courses.

"I have a captain who is interested in the Indians of Arizona. He plans to retire and move to Arizona. Now he is learning to speak the Navajo language, and I provide him books on the subject.

"We have helped boys finish high school and we have a program for alcoholics. We provide audio tapes from Alcoholics Anonymous for them to listen to.

"Alcoholism is a big problem aboard ship. Now a man who has the problem must join a rehabilitation program to keep his job. If not he is fired. Ours is a recognized program.

Inside the library, Nancyann has books on a wide variety of topics for Great Lakes seamen.

"We help in other ways too. Some seamen hook rugs in their spare time. Others work with macrame equipment. The men on the Benson Ford, a Ford Motor Co. ship, make Tiffany lampshades with colored glass.

"I provide the material and equipment whenever I can," she said. The library association is affiliated with the United Seamen's Service which provides recreational facilities for merchant seamen in some of the most isolated ports in the world.

Merchant marine libraries are located in Boston, New York, New Orleans, San Francisco and Seattle.

Nancyann emphasized that the association isn't in service just to help seamen pass time.

"Actually we help keep seamen relaxed and refreshed and those add up to safety factors at sea. More than 85 per cent of shipboard accidents are the result of human error and refreshed, relaxed people just don't make as many errors," she said. ⚓

Many Command Changes Within MSC Military

Admirals gather during informal change-of-command ceremonies. From left are outgoing MSC commander Rear Adm. John D. Johnson (now vice admiral), incoming commander Rear Adm. Bruce Keener, III and Vice Adm. Thomas J. Bigley, Second Fleet commander.

From an informal change-of-command handshake in Washington, D.C. to formal ceremonies in Japan, Germany and in between, the military family of Military Sealift Command was involved in major changes this summer.

At headquarters, Rear Adm. Bruce Keener, III became the eleventh MSC commander. He replaced Rear Adm. John D. Johnson, Jr. who was promoted to vice admiral and took command of Naval Surface Force, Atlantic Fleet. Admiral Keener had been Assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Surface Warfare.

At the Far East area command in Yokohama, Capt. Joe Don Camp succeeded Capt. Gerald W. Dyer as commander. This is Captain Camp's fourth MSC assignment. His last job was as commanding officer of the MSC office in the Philippines. Captain Dyer retired after 35 years in the Navy.

Capt. Ronald W. Kerslake took command of MSC, Europe during formal ceremonies in Bremerhaven. He relieved Capt. Thomas G. Kiefaber who became assistant chief of staff for operations and plans at MSC, Pacific in Oakland Calif.

Army Maj. Gen. Edward A. Partain, director of logistics and security for the European Command, was the principal speaker. He also presented Captain Kiefaber with a Legion of Merit for outstanding service during the past two years as commander of MSC, Europe. Also, General Partain presented Captain Kerslake the Meritorious Service Medal as well as the Joint Services

Capt. Richard Gooden accepts command of MSC, Atlantic. Standing in background is Capt. Robert Richards, chief staff officer.

Commendation medal for his performance as MSC representative at European Command headquarters.

Stepping into Captain Kerslake's old job was Capt. Thomas Groce, formerly commanding officer of the Naval Reserve and Marine Corps Training Center in Adelphi, Md.

Across the Atlantic at Bayonne, N.J., Capt. Richard O. Gooden relieved Capt. Herman E. Fritzke, Jr. as commander of MSC, Atlantic. Captain Fritzke retired after 27 years in the Navy.

Approximately 500 employees and guests attended traditional ceremonies on the helicopter deck of USNS Harkness.

Rear Adm. Carl A. Brettschneider, commandant of the Fourth Naval District, was the keynote speaker on behalf of Admiral Johnson who was involved in his own turnover of command. Admiral Brettschneider presented Captain Fritzke with the Legion of Merit for outstanding performance as Atlantic area commander.

In Florida, the MSC, Port Canaveral office lost 14 years of MSC experience when Cmdr. Charles M. Rowland, Jr. retired. He was replaced by Cmdr. Katherine L. Laughton, the second woman to hold a full-time command position in MSC (Cmdr. Elizabeth G. Wylie has been commanding officer of the MSC, Seattle office since September 1978).

Commander Laughton previously received the Meritorious Service Medal for her performance as deputy director of the command information systems in Washington.

Capt. Joe Camp (left) now commands MSC, Far East. Capt. Ronald Kerslake not only took command of MSC, Europe but the same day received two medals for his performance as MSC representative to European Command. Maj. Gen. Edward Partain congratulates Kerslake.

Eight hands beat two for cutting the change-of-command cake at the Port Canaveral office. From left are: Robert Laughton; Cmdr. Katherine Laughton, new office commanding officer; Marty Rowland, and Cmdr. Charles Rowland, retiring commanding officer.

Redstone Nurse Handles Voices, Flying Turkey

Wind can be rough on hair, but Nurse Hulcher takes it in stride. A cap is Bos'n Basil Maletich's solution.

Sarah Hulcher, the young ship's nurse aboard USNS Redstone, holds a master's degree in psychology, but she bites her fingernails and smokes two packs of cigarettes a day whenever she's in port.

"But I stop it as soon as we go to sea," she adds.

"It is so peaceful at sea," she explains. "You have no newspapers or television. It's just you and the other people of the crew on a floating island. You don't get distracted by what's going on in Israel, or Saudi Arabia, or the rising price of oil.

"The sea limits my world to a manageable size," she says.

Hulcher, who comes from Richmond, Va. has been aboard the Redstone for more than two years and sailed aboard USNS Wyman before that.

What does she think about being a ship's nurse? "It's the best job I ever had," she says.

Hulcher was a nurse at the South Beach Psychiatric Center in Coney Island Hospital in Brooklyn when she heard that MSC was looking for medically trained personnel like her.

"I loved psychiatry, and I really liked the work I was doing there. But 16 hours of therapy a day was quite a lot," she recalls.

Originally Hulcher never planned to work longer than six months with MSC. Now she doesn't know when she will leave.

"I'm always in a continuous state of indecision about staying or leaving," she smiles.

Perhaps one reason for her reluctance to leave is the rapport that Hulcher has with almost everybody in the crew. And perhaps part of the reason for the rapport is her psy-

chiatric training which makes her a good listener.

"The sick bay is like a safe harbor. I mediate arguments and fights. I advise the captain and I work with the engine and steward departments. People know they can talk to me and it won't go beyond here.

"It's not defined as psychiatry, but it is," she says. Application of horse sense—or common sense—call it what you will, probably could be defined the same way.

Hulcher doesn't practice psychoanalysis. "The kind of therapy I do here is supportive," she says. "I try to help people."

She is a sort of ship's chaplain with a medical and psychological training. She did have six psychiatric cases which she describes as bona fide.

"In three cases they were actually hearing voices. We had to put one man ashore for treatment in the middle of a cruise. Two others were helped by tranquilizers," she recalls.

In the three other cases, she invited the crew members to come to her office twice a week and talk things out.

"One guy asked me to do family therapy for him for a fee. I said I couldn't do that," she explains.

Hulcher is fascinated by the people she lives and works with.

"There are a lot of well educated people out here. I was surprised when I first came aboard. I thought they would all be men with tattoos on their bodies.

"People ashore have the wrong impression about seamen," Hulcher says. "I remember I wanted to get a loan from a Richmond bank, but they refused to give it to me because I was a merchant seaman," she says.

"At sea you have to make a lot of decisions which a doctor makes in a hospital."

"The reason merchant seamen got such bad reputations is that originally there were a rough lot, and often were forced to go to sea. That's just not true any longer," she says.

Hulcher wants to do a study on why people go to sea.

She believes there are two major reasons for it—money and romanticism.

"Where else can you work seven days a week, get a top salary and overtime plus free room and board?" she asks.

But it's the romanticism that fascinates her.

"These are the real seamen, those who do what they do because they love it. You don't find it as much in the engine room as in the deck department.

"It's the bos'n and the able bodied maintenance men who carry on the real tradition of the sea," she says.

"We had a man aboard ship once, his name was Andy King. He was a carpenter. As a hobby he made macrame. He made frames and all sorts of fancy stuff out of knots.

"And he taught it too. But if you wanted to learn from him, you had to work. He gave you homework and he made you tie knots by name.

"He was a true seaman. He loved going to sea," she recalls with admiration.

What does it take to stay at sea?

"You have to be a wanderer. Some say you have to be a loner. Maybe it's the same thing," Hulcher says.

"You have to be able to make friends and not be afraid to leave them. It's hard to have any continuity in your relationships. I write to people I met in Brazil and the Canary Islands and Germany. It's better than pen pals."

Hulcher frankly tells you she comes from the hectic hippie generation of the 1960s.

"My generation was raised to believe you must go into white collar work. But it's not like that. At sea you have to start at the bottom and do dirty work.

"I have a brother of 20. A lot of his friends were flunking out in school. I tried to get him to go to sea. But he wouldn't. His generation wants immediate gratification—good paying jobs and lots of parties. The sea would be good for him. But he wouldn't go."

Naturally Hulcher is prepared for all medical emergencies. If it is serious she gets radio instructions from doctors in Bayonne or Cape Canaveral.

What was the most serious medical problem she had?

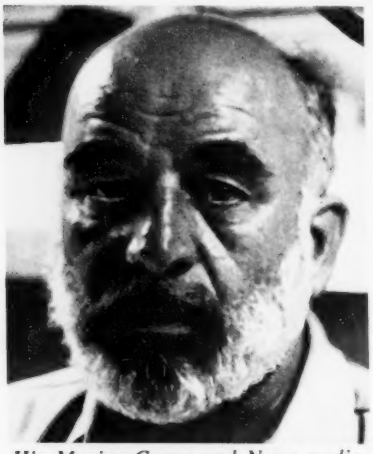
"A guy got hit on the head by 130 pounds of frozen turkey and I treated him for a concussion," she recalls.

Anyway you look at it she ends up treating the head.

How do you keep away from treating the head? Hulcher laughs.

"A hug a day keeps the psychiatrist away. That's my motto," she says. ⚓

MSC Nurses In Second Careers



His Marine Corps and Navy medic experiences helped make Peacock an ideal ship's nurse.

"I didn't have anything pressing to do, so I decided to go to sea," says ship's nurse Eileen Bortfeld.

It never occurred to Billie Peacock, 51, of Newcastle, Ind. that the Navy's Military Sealift Command could use his skills as a medic.

That's why he signed on board USNS Marias as an ordinary seaman when he joined the crew on May 7, 1978.

You might wonder why Billie Peacock wanted to go to sea again, after 26 years, 4 months and 28 days in the U.S. Navy.

He wonders about it too, but he doesn't let it get to him.

"Why did I go to sea?" He repeats your question. "It was just there, I guess."

Actually, it was a personal thing—the kind of personal thing that traditionally has sent men off to sea—and lately women, too.

Billie was getting divorced. It was as good a reason as any to go.

The former Navy hospitalman already knew about MSC. He had sailed aboard USNS Bowditch and Harkness as a Navy corpsman.

That well may be the reason it didn't occur to him that the Marias—or any MSC ship for that matter—needed a civilian medic like him.

"I heard they had nurses. But, I assumed you had to be a graduate registered nurse," he said.

Although his work day is the customary 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Billie Peacock is around for any emergency since there is nowhere to go when a ship is at sea. But, not too many unusual things happen.

"Most generally it's colds and athlete's foot, the same kind of stuff you run into in the Navy.

"But you get a lot of people with blood pressure problems. The average age of the crew around here is 45 plus and that's when the blood pressure problems start," he said.

MSC needs registered nurses or retired military medics to serve as nurses aboard its ships, and more and more retired military men are joining MSC crews.

Billie had plenty of experience, possibly more than the average nurse. He was a Marine medic in Korea in 1950. He had attended field medical school in 1960, and he had independent duty as a medic during his Navy career.

MSC did need former military medics like Billie, and still does. But Billie didn't know that. So he came aboard with a Coast Guard certification as an ordinary seaman, wiper and messman.

What did he do?

"I learned how to splice line. The bos'n gave me a book on splicing, I read it and I spliced eyes. I spliced eyes on eight-inch nylon line," he said proudly.

But you can't keep a professional man away from his skills and Billie Peacock couldn't stay away from the sick bay.

The nurse aboard the Marias knew Peacock and the crew also knew that Billie was a medical man. So he was called upon to help. And he helped. When a deckhand was badly injured, Billie helped the ship's nurse treat the man until he was evacuated by helicopter.

When the ship's nurse was transferred, Billie was offered his job. "They sent me to school and made me a corpsman," he said.

But Eileen M. Bortfeld is a different type of retired person.

Eileen is a new nurse on USNS Range Sentinel, but she has been around a long time as far as her knowledge of seamen goes.

Eileen's husband is chief mate of USNS Kingsport, so she has been a seaman's wife most of her adult life.

She is also a registered nurse.

The Range Sentinel is her first seagoing job. Eileen, like many mothers with grown children, suddenly found herself with nothing exciting to do at home.

"We always lived in California where we had a home in San Clemente. I worked in a hospital in Santa Ana. My husband was aboard USNS Vandenberg.

"Then he was transferred to the Kingsport on the East Coast. My youngest son turned 18, and I didn't have anything pressing to do, so I decided to go to sea," she recalled.

Eileen joined the Range Sentinel in October 1978 and she loves her new job.

"Being a ship's nurse is different from working in a hospital. At sea you have to make some decisions which a doctor makes in a hospital," she explained.

Eileen runs a six-bed sick bay as well as an isolation ward.

She said hers is a challenging, exciting job, and adds that being a ship's nurse certainly is different.

Jules Leal Reminisces About The Sea He Loves

Thirty-five years at sea, and Jules Leal, 64, chief steward of USNS Range Sentinel, still can't break away from it.

"They say it grows on you and you never get over going to sea," the mild-mannered old salt explains.

Leal, from New Orleans, began his nautical career with the U.S. Navy in World War II. The war ended but he kept going as a Civil Service mariner—employed first by the Army and now the Navy. United States Naval Ships—USNS—are government ships operated by Navy's Military Sealift Command.

"I've sailed all over the world in all sorts of weather and in all kinds of storms," he recalls.

He can remember when ships were hot and uncomfortable and when crews slept in large compartments, dormitory style.

"We called it the glory hole," he smiles, "and I had to sleep there with 20 other guys."

If things were rough for seamen after World War II, then what were they like before the war?

Capt. Harry Anderson, skipper of USNS Redstone first went to sea in 1937.

"When I was starting ships were just moving from coal to oil," he recalled. "Men slept on straw mattresses and there were two messes—the officers got the food and the crew got the scraps."

Pay was a dollar a day for "half a day's work," which meant 12 of every 24 hours, from sunup to sundown.

"And God help you if you refused to work. You got thrown off at the next port," Anderson remembers.

"I was a depression baby. There was no money, and no jobs. All my uncles were whalers and skippers. I had an uncle who was a sea captain for American Export Lines."

So Anderson went to sea.

"There was nothing romantic about me going to sea. I went to earn a livelihood," he says.

"All the old-timers are products of the depression. They ate stale bread and coffee. And God help you if you didn't like Spanish omelettes," he recalled.

But somehow men stay with the sea. Anderson insists it has nothing to do with romanticism. It's purely a means of earning a living.

At 64, Chief Steward Leal still feels the call of the sea.

"They say it grows on you and you never get over going to sea."

Leal agrees that sailing is a means of livelihood and a way to raise a family. But he feels the sea holds an attraction that cannot be compared to shoreside jobs.

"I sailed old C3 troopships to Cuba, Panama and Puerto Rico. And in the Korean War I sailed aboard C4s carrying Turkish and Greek troops. They were more or less natural enemies, but their relationship aboard ship was good," he says.

The troopships, like other vessels bearing USNS designations, were operated by Military Sealift Command which now employs nearly 4,000 civilian mariners, all Navy Civil Service employees.

Leal was aboard the Gen. William O. Darby from 1953 to 1966, mostly carrying dependents to and from Europe.

But, in 1965, the ship began ferrying troops to Vietnam.

And while Leal spent those lonely years at sea, his wife raised three daughters in New Orleans.

Today, he says proudly, one daughter is a psychiatrist in New York City, the second works in public relations in Toledo, Ohio, and the third is married to a stockbroker in California.

"And we have a beautiful family relationship," he adds. "No matter where we all are, we fly home to New Orleans for Christmas."

Leal pays tribute to his wife for the happy family he heads. "A seaman needs a very good wife to understand his life," he says.

"Yes, you never get over going to sea. You're away from the hustle and bustle of city life.

"It's a wonderful feeling," he continues as he tries to explain the call of the sea. "It's a wonderful feeling to wake up in the morning and not only be right on your job—but have the peace and the quiet that you have at sea."

Leal is thoughtful for a moment.

"That's a seaman's compensation," he says.

And probably only a seaman would understand. ⚓

MSC oiler Navasota pumps fuel over-the-stern to the frigate Bradley.

Tankers Turn Into Oilers With New Refueling Rigs

By Suzanne J. Stack

Military Sealift command has added six new oilers to its fleet—without really adding a single ship.

How is that possible?

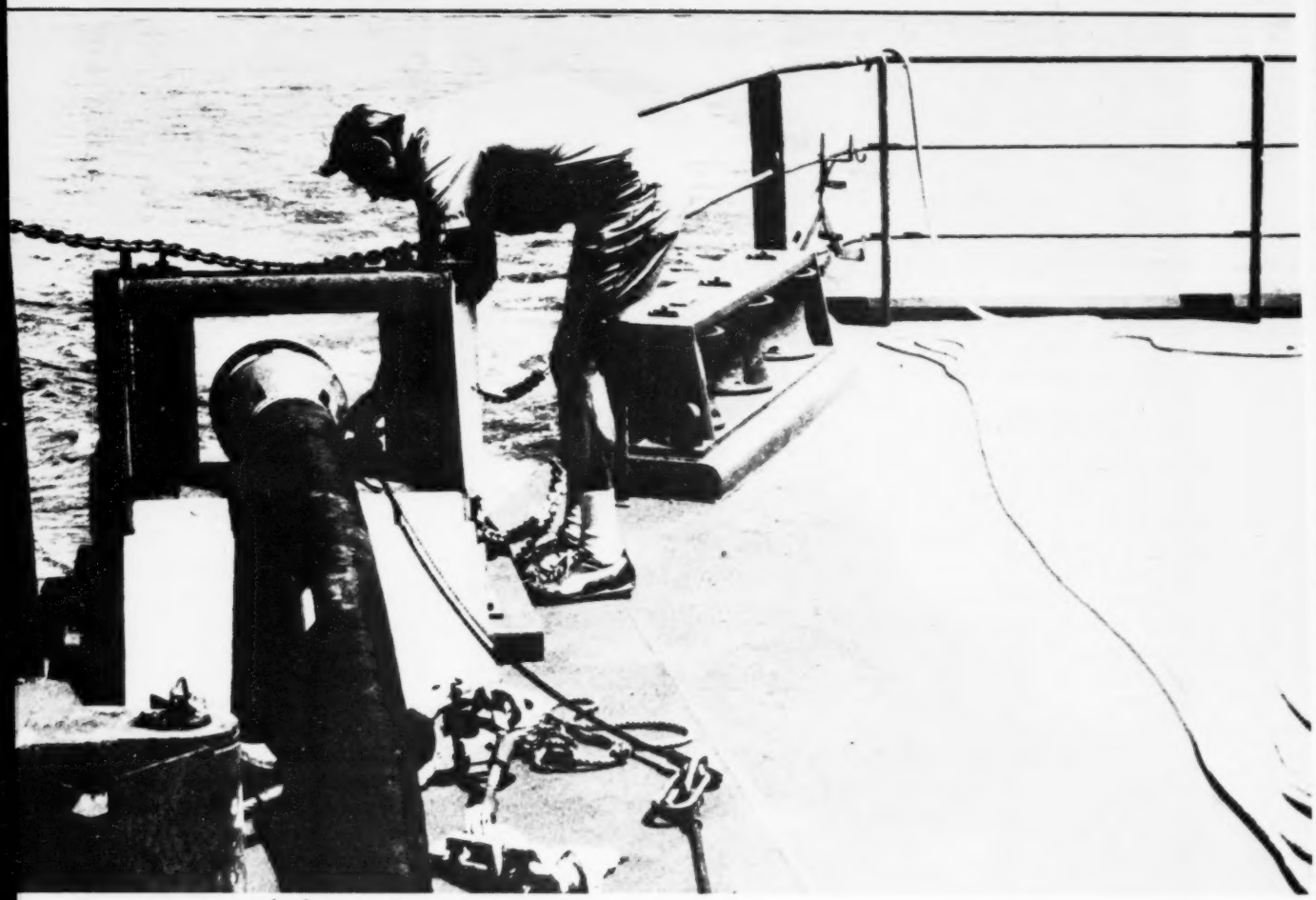
Six MSC ships under long term bareboat charter have been outfitted with astern refueling rigs which allow the tankers involved in point-to-point delivery to replenish fleet ships that normally are dependent on oilers for fuel.

MSC tankers pick up varied products at a refinery and deliver their cargo to a designated port. Ships must refuel in port or else an oiler must deliver the fuel to a ship at sea.

Equipped with the astern refueling rigs, MSC tankers now can deliver fuel directly to ships while under way. During wartime, the tankers could resupply destroyers escorting a merchant convoy and the convoy would not be dependent solely on fleet oilers. Given the small number of operating oilers, that's a big plus.

"The astern rigs help MSC give longer legs to a convoy," said Cmdr. Jim Quinn, deputy director of the MSC tanker division.

Astern rigs are the least expensive



Navasota crewman checks stern rig before pumping begins.

and most adaptable method of equipping merchant-type tankers with fuel delivery rigs without limiting the economic viability of a merchant ship. Relatively minor modifications to a ship are needed.

Major changes in refueling procedures are needed, though. The entire over-the-stern process is different than alongside refueling, a method normally used by the U.S. Navy.

In astern refueling, the tanker steams at about 12 knots ahead of the receiving ship, trailing a fuel hose in the water. The crew of the receiving ship uses a grapnel hook to catch the hose messenger line and pulls it aboard the ship. After the hose is hooked to the receiving ship's fuel system, pumping begins while the two ships continue to steam ahead with the receiving ship approximately 200 yards off the starboard quarter of the tanker.

The 745-foot hoses of the over-the-stern rigs are approximately 2½ times the length of hoses used in alongside refueling. Since the ships stay farther apart, station-keeping is less critical during an astern refueling than it is alongside.

Crews generally have been enthusiastic since it cuts down on hose weight and oil spills.

Longer hoses also provide an advantage during combat. During an

Continued

Merchant Marine Academy Cadet John Ciastkewicz launches station buoy off tanker Sealift Antarctic under watchful eye of Bos'n Tom Kennedy.

Chief Pumpman Paul May connects hoses.

Refueling

Continued

air assault threat, weapons of either ship could fire (assuming tankers were equipped with defensive weapons). Maneuverability is also greater, and a tanker and destroyer would present two distinct targets. During alongside refueling, a single torpedo conceivably could finish both ships.

All astern rigs use NATO standardized couplings so any tanker equipped with an astern rig can refuel any NATO ship. And an increase in number of ships capable of refueling combatants obviously would be advantageous in wartime. Destroyers, for example, need fuel every few days.

Astern refueling rigs now in use were not developed overnight.

"There were no real blueprints to work with," recalled Bud Rehme, MSC engineer involved in the project. "All we had were 40 astern rig sets from war reserve stocks."

A test, using the Erna Elizabeth, an MSC chartered tanker, in 1972 showed up their shortcomings.

Luckily, Arthur Ivey, an MSC engineer had a "better idea," several in fact. He drew some on-the-spot modifications on the back of an old envelope. Revised per his suggestions, the astern rig functioned, but not too well.

His on-the-spot ideas were developed by the Naval Sea Systems Command in Norfolk and, by 1973, fourteen improved rigs were available.

The USNS Potomac, A T-5 tanker under long term charter to MSC, was the first to get a new rig.

The crew of the Potomac tested the rig during Operation Solid Shield in 1977, refueling USS Mahan and Hart. Lack of deck space on one destroyer and hose difficulties did hamper the test somewhat but it proved that the astern rig worked.

A month later, the crew of the Navasota, an MSC oiler, refueled USS Bradley using an astern rig. Other tests of the improved rigs on tankers and oilers followed.

In May 1978, the Potomac crew again tested the rig, successfully refueling USS Bowen while under way and using a new hose cleanout system for the first time. (See separate story on the 'pigs').

And on August 6, the Potomac sent its stern refueling hose to five ships that make up the Standing Naval Forces Atlantic, a NATO task force operating off Jacksonville, Fla.

Task force commodore Capt. Gerald M. Carter, aboard USS Coontz, sent a message to the Potomac citing the "professionalism and cooperation" of the tanker's crew. "Please pass our thanks to all concerned," he said.

Six tankers have been outfitted with astern rigs, the Potomac and five Sealift class tankers. Included are Atlantic, Antarctic, Indian Ocean, China Sea and Arabian Sea. Fleet oilers equipped with astern rigs in addition to alongside rigs are Waccamaw, Pawcatuck, Navasota and Taluga.

"We put astern rigs on oilers for peacetime practice only. If war broke out, the oiler's astern rig would be transferred to a tanker," said Ken Hylind, head of the Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force branch at MSC headquarters. "The crews of the receiving ships need the practice and a tanker with an astern rig isn't always available."

Neches, Sealift Mediterranean and Sealift Pacific will be the next MSC ships to get the new astern rigs. By 1985, 18 MSC controlled ships are scheduled to have the new rigs in place. Eventually nearly all MSC nucleus fleet tankers—those carrying the USNS designation—will be able to refuel other ships at sea over-the-stern. ⚓

Pigs At Sea

A six pack of pigs will soon be stowed aboard every MSC tanker or oiler equipped with an astern refueling rig.

The pigs are actually polyurethane sponge bullets, packed six to a crate, which will be used to clean out fuel remaining in hoses after a refueling at sea. The Navy's traditional cleanout methods of air blowdown and back-suction of fuel hoses are not as efficient when applied to hoses used in over-the-stern refueling.

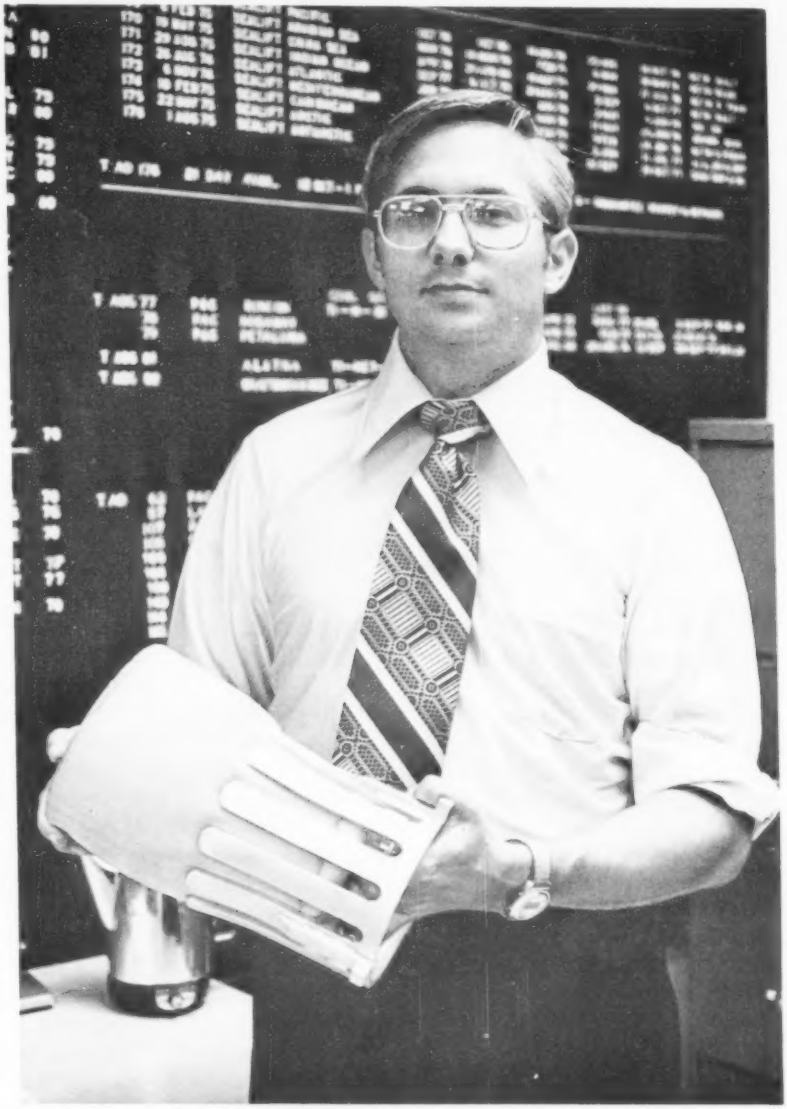
The new system is simple and is commonly used in cleaning overland pipelines before a new product is to be pumped. After a ship fueling is complete, a foam bullet or pig is pushed through the hose under low air pressure and clears out fuel remaining in the line. Since the pig is slightly larger in diameter than the inside of the hose, it acts like a piston in a cylinder, driving the fuel out of the hose and into the receiving ship's fuel tank. The pig is expendable.

The pig, a device to stop it from passing into the fuel tank, a restriction in the delivery ship's compressed air line to prevent the pig from traveling too fast plus a few pieces of simple hardware complete the system.

The hose cleaning process is simple and less expensive than buying additional large capacity air compressors for MSC tankers.

The compressors would have been required if the conventional blowdown of hoses were used on tankers equipped with astern refueling rigs. The long hose on an astern rig, more than 2½ times the length of an alongside hose, is too much for compressed air systems on most tankers to handle. The new system is cheaper and more efficient.

It was an MSC employee, Roland H. Groder, formerly with the MSC engineering office, who suggested using the foam bullets. He earned $1,500 for his idea. In presenting Groder's award, the MSC commander said it would save more than $250,000.



MSC engineer Dave Cook holds a pig and its catcher.

Advanced Marine Enterprises, Inc. developed the cleanout system following specifications drawn up by MSC tanker and engineering specialists.

Avoiding purchases of compressors was not the only savings. Use of the pigs recovers more fuel than the traditional blowdown cleanout which leaves 10 to 15 per cent of a fuel hose still coated with fuel. Pigs purge the line completely of fuel,

Pigs purge the line completely of fuel.

forcing all that's left into the receiving ship's fuel tanks.

That reduces the chance for spilling oil in the ocean or on deck when hoses are broken down for storage.

In addition, crewmen don't have

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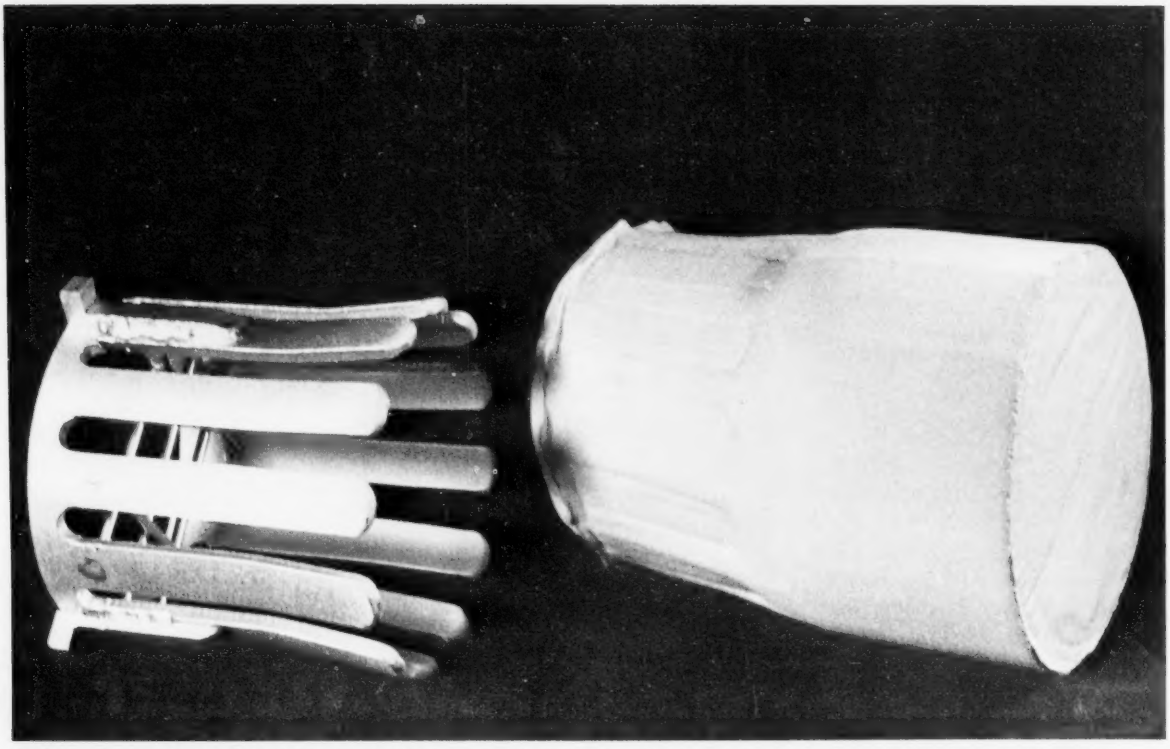

Polyurethane pig (right) cleans out fuel hoses and its receiver (left) prevents pig from passing into fuel tank.

Pigs

Continued

to wrestle with a dirty and heavier hose.

The device selected by MSC was chosen in a "pig judging contest" aboard USNS Potomac in early 1978. Four different pigs ranging in price from $10 to $200, were tested in a 500-foot length of refueling hose.

Each was inserted into a water filled hose and propelled through it by compressed air. Every pig tested wiped the hose clean and dry. Two of the foam bullets, however, tended to break up. Another was too rigid and made the hose whip back and forth as it passed through.

"Polly Pig" made by the Knapp Company, the last to be tested, was the winner.

It required the lowest air pressure to push it through the hose, conformed to the shape of the hose when traveling through and was least expensive of the four tested, costing only $10.

The pig looks somewhat like an overgrown 'nerf ball' squashed into a cylindrical shape. The cylinder is coated with a lipstick red paint and sealer on both ends to help it glide easily through the lines. Unlike its barnyard relatives, the MSC pig is small, only 6¾ inches in diameter and 9 inches long.

A final test at sea on May 19, 1978 confirmed the value of Groder's suggestion. After USNS Potomac had refueled USS Bowen, a pig was sent on its way through the hose and couplings. It left the hoses clean.

The hose was so clean, in fact, that Navy engineers are exploring the possibility of passing multiple fuels through a single refueling hookup. An oiler or tanker might be able to send a carrier diesel fuel and then, after several pig cleanouts, pump helicopter gasoline through the same hookup.

Tested aboard fleet oilers, the new system effectively cleaned out hoses used in alongside replenishment.

A new system for cleaning fuel hoses will save $250,000.

One such test was conducted aboard USNS Mississinewa in March 1978 and it is anticipated that use of foam pigs to clean out refueling line may be expanded within MSC. Crews generally have been enthusiastic since it cuts down on hose weight and spills that need to be cleaned up. MSC management has been impressed by the savings and operational advantages inherent to the new system.

And Roland Groder is happy with the $1,500 award he received for his suggestion. All of which points out that ideas can pay off for the person who suggests a better way to get the job done, and to a command interested in cutting costs while simultaneously improving efficiency.—S.J.S. ⚓

NOTES & LETTERS

We told you, in the August issue of Sealift, that Notes & Letters would be a regular feature of the MSC magazine. But, we didn't tell you what we have in mind. The plan--and you know how military plans change--is to provide late info of general interest. We can't do that when we have to go through the whole process of writing, editing, proofing layout, printing, etc. That takes time--weeks. This page we are setting in the office, just before the magazine goes to the printer.

And we hope to hear from you. We'll be happy to print your comments, criticisms, and now and then a word of praise. We also would like to print names, to recognize that gal or guy who does something extra--on the job or off. So, start those letters coming.

Ironically, having launched Notes & Letters only last month, we have a letter from a young lady who has several gripes, all warranted. Her name, Cheryl Ann Barnes. She is working toward a couple of goals which is the reason she is aboard USNS Redstone, or was when she wrote. Have to watch anything that could be an error for we already have done enough to Cheryl Ann Barnes. First we changed her name to Linda in the June issue story. We mentioned her visits to Aruba and should have said Aquaba, gave credit to a new engineer for helping provide training opportunities, and left the impression that her mother had told her she had to "get out of the house" after two more years of college.

More mistakes there than we have made in the past three years, all packed into one story about a young lady we think typical of other women aboard MSC ships, women with goals who are willing to work for advancement. The writer's notes said Cheryl Ann as plain as the scar he now has on both typing fingers, and he admits he is "hanging his head in shame." Meanwhile his wife, a practicing psychiatrist, is helping him delve into his subconscious to determine who the real Linda may be.

Aquaba became Aruba when a proofreader corrected an indistinct letter and the engineer whose help Cheryl said she appreciated is Chief Engineer Nicholas Bdera. The point about her parents expecting her to strike out on her own obviously could be misinterpreted and was. Parkinson's Law? What Cheryl said to the writer, and what he was trying to get into his story--which many people liked--was that Miss Barnes had long-range goals, that she did not expect her parents to pick up the tab for college years still ahead after receiving her initial degree, and that she planned to combine working toward an engineer's license and certification as a psychologist.

As she noted in her letter to Sealift, "My parents have been nothing but supportive of me in all of my endeavors and only felt that it would be time for me to go out and get a job after four years of college." All of us who have paid those escalating tuition tabs understand that and if the words obscured the message, we apologize.

So much for the Sackcloth and Ashes. It's never easy to publicize error but Cheryl Ann helped when she began her letter with, "It was certainly an honor to appear in your magazine."

Midshipmen from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md. have begun to take their summer training cruises aboard Military Sealift Command ships. This summer four trained aboard the survey ship USNS Dutton operating in the Western Pacific. Here Midshipmen Barbara Morris (left) and Tim Dunlevy pose with Capt. Arne Willenhag and Ens. Deborah Edwards, liaison officer.

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